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Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Terrell Williams. I am a Personal Care Attendant living in New Haven, CT and I have been doing this work for 12 years.

Working as a Personal Care Attendant is something I am incredibly proud of. Home care work is certainly not for everyone but if you have a mind for taking care of people, it just makes sense. I like the one on one time I get to share with my consumers. It's not just a job, you get to develop wonderful relationships with your consumers and there is an instant reward when you're doing this work knowing you're helping someone. When I leave my family in the morning to go provide for them, I feel good and happy doing this work.

I typically care for three consumers, which allows me to make enough money to get by. Unfortunately, this also results in me earning too much money to qualify for Husky. When the COVID Pandemic began, the number of consumers I was caring for went from three to one. One of my consumers became ill and had to enter a facility, while I had to stop caring for another consumer due to an outbreak on the public transportation I used to reach his home. With my income reduced I was able to access Husky for a short period of time. However, I lost my eligibility around Thanksgiving of last year when I began working with more consumers once more.

Without access to Husky, I tried to get insurance through the state health insurance exchange. Unfortunately, the cheapest plan available was still nearly \$300 a month for an individual and did not cover dental, which is important to me as I am in need of a dental procedure that would cost me \$1,500 without insurance. I still have not had this procedure done, and I fear additional dental issues may arise because of it. I've had to resort to eating soup, oatmeal, and other softer foods, because I can't chew very well.

I am also diabetic. Last year, when I wasn't treating my diabetes because I didn't have access to insurance, I actually lost my sight temporarily. At one point, I went to the hospital and my sugar was so high the doctor was shocked I was still standing. How can we be caregivers for others if our own health reaches crisis levels?

If we had benefits in homecare, like health insurance, paid sick days, and retirement, it would allow me to begin addressing medical issues and procedures I've been putting off. We care for

the most vulnerable; and all we're asking for is to be able to care for ourselves, too. Thank you for your time.